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COUNTRY Poland/Eastern Germany

SUBJECT Conditions in the Turow Coal Mines

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1. "Brown coal is being produced in Turow. The coal mines are located right on the borderline with Eastern Germany, near the Nysa (Neisse) River. The industry continues to be a large and complex setup on both sides of the river. On the Polish side, production in the coal mines is going on in three shifts. All the mined coal is transported to the German side of the river, to Hirschfeld. There it is sorted out, manufactured into briquets, or sent to chemical enterprises. The German authorities in Hirschfeld buy this brown coal from the Polish mines for about 25 zlotys per ton. The briquets made from this coal and shipped back to Poland for the use of the population are sold for 90 to 100 zlotys per ton.
2. "Both sections of the coal industry, in Turow and Hirschfeld, are connected by four bridges across the Nysa River. Two of these bridges, which used to be used for regular traffic, are now completely closed. The other two are open for the use of the factory and coal mines. Anyone who wants to cross over either of these two bridges can only do so with a special frontier pass. Strict control is maintained over both bridges, and in practice, no Pole is allowed to go to the German side of the river. On the other hand, many German specialists cross the bridges every day to go to work in the Polish mines.
3. "Nearly all the work in the Turow coal mines is done by machine. The machines are rather worn out; however, in January 1952, two new coal-cutting machines were brought from the Skoda factory in Czechoslovakia. There are nine other coal-cutting machines, but these are of pre-war make, of the Siemens or Aeg types. The Turow mines have no underground pits; the coal is worked from the surface. Coal fields in this district are rather extensive. Coal is produced from an area about five kilometers long and three kilometers wide along the Nysa River.

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4. "A special kind of clay is also dug out of the soil. This is transported for further production processes to the factories on the German side of the Nysa.
5. "The total number of workers at the Turow coal mines is about 1,000; approximately 50 are women and girls. Out of the 1,000 total only about 200 are Poles, who have been resettled from central Poland or repatriated from France. The 1,000 total also includes approximately 250 Germans, most of whom live in Germany though coming to work on the Polish side of the river. The rest of the workers are natives of Silesia who have been brought to Turow from the coal-mining area farther east.
6. "The average pay of the Polish worker at the mines is about 500 zlotys a month. The Germans receive a monthly pay of 400 to 450 East Marks a month each; they receive this pay not from the Polish management of the mines but from the management of the Hirschfeld factory.
7. "A special agreement between Eastern Germany and Poland covers the utilization of the Turow-Hirschfeld area.
8. "The Polish section of the entire coal mining enterprise along the Nysa river is now under the management of Director Gieresz, a man who became an invalid during World War II. He is an active member of the Communist Party; he was appointed to his post as a hero of the regime although he has no idea about how to manage the mines.
9. "The Chief of Security in the Polish section bears the appropriate name of Postrach (Terror). This 35-year old activist is in charge of security matters on behalf of the UB Headquarters in the Luban (Lauban) district. To carry out his work, Postrach has organized a network of agents and denouncers. They include the electrician Weckowski, a 43-year old man who lives in the nearby village of Trzcinec; Medrykowski, about 28 years old, living in Bogatynia and working in the coal mines as a railway signalman; and Gorny, about 40 years old, German born, who claims to have been a soldier in General Anders' Army; he is working as a foreman.
10. "A local ZMP is very active in Turow. It is now headed by 24-year old Anirzejczak, who came a few years ago with his parents from France. A married couple, called Slowik, are also at the top of the ZMP organization. They are in charge of all political and 'recreational' facilities.
11. "A large number of the workers, about 70%, at the Turow coal mines favor the Polish Communist regime. The following reasons may be cited:
 - (a) A large number of the workers at the mines are among the Poles who returned home from France and who are considered Communists or pro-Communists of long standing.
 - (b) A large group of specially selected trainees are from the nearby vocational school for coal miners in Trzcinec.
 - (c) There is quite a strong group of German Communist workers. These Germans who have been given permission to work in Poland are from a specially selected and checked group of persons.
12. "Even in such a milieu, however, disturbances break out. During the second half of December 1951, the groups of young coal miners in training came to grips with the Director of the Mines, Gieresz. They demanded higher pay, and as most of them were members of the ZMP, the management of the coal mines agreed to their demands and raised their wages to the level of the regular workers' wages. Dissatisfaction among the workers again cropped up in January 1952 when two of the coal mines won the 'voluntary' competitions held between them and another Silesian mine. A premium was granted this success, but none of the miners received any money, for the total premium was divided up among the Director of the Turow mines, Gieresz, who received 3,000 zlotys; the Chief Engineer, Machnik, who received 1,200 zlotys; and the Foreman, Warchal, who received 400 zlotys."

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